

THE
CASE
OF
KNEELING
AT THE
Holy Sacrament
STATED & RESOLVED.

PART I.

Wherein these **QUERIES** are considered :

- I. Whether Kneeling at the Sacrament be contrary to any exprefs Command of Christ, obliging to the observance of a different Gesture?
- II. Whether Kneeling be not a Deviation from that example which our Lord set us at the first Institution?
- III. Whether Kneeling be not Unfutable and Repugnant to the Nature of the Lord's Supper, as being no Table - Gesture?

The Second EDITION.

LONDON: Printed by J. C. and Freeman Collins, for Fincham Gardiner at the *White-Horse* in *Ludgate-street*. 1683.



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THE CASE

Whether it be Lawful to receive the Holy Sacrament Kneeling ?

THe Resolution of the most weighty and considerable Doubts which may in point of Conscience arise about this matter (and do at present much influence the minds and practices of many honest and well-meaning Dissenters) will depend upon the Resolution of these following Queries.

1. Whether Kneeling in the Act of Receiving the Holy Sacrament according to the Law of the Land, be not contrary to some express Law of Christ obliging to the observance of a different Posture?
2. Whether Kneeling be not a deviation from that example which our Lord set us at the first Institution?
3. Whether Kneeling be not altogether Unfutable

and Repugnant to the nature of the Sacrament, as being no Table-Gesture?

4. Whether Kneeling Commanded in the Church of *England* be not contrary to the general Practice of the Church of Christ in the first and purest Ages?

5. Whether it be Unlawful for us to receive Kneeling because this Gesture was first introduced by Idolaters, and is still notoriously abused by the Papists to Idolatrous ends and purposes.

1. Whether Kneeling in the Act of Receiving the Sacrament in Obedience to the Law of the Land, be not a Transgression against some express Law of Christ which obliges us to observe another Gesture?

For satisfaction in this Point, our onely recourse must be to the Holy Scriptures contained in the Books of the New Testament, wherein the whole body of Divine Laws delivered and enacted by our Blessed Saviour, are collected and recorded by the Holy Ghost. And if there be any Command there extant concerning the use of any particular Gesture in the Act of Receiving the Lord's Supper, we shall upon a diligent enquiry be sure to find it. But before I give in my Answer, I readily grant thus much by way of Preface. Whatsoever is enjoined and appointed by God to be perpetually used by all Christians throughout all Ages without any alteration, that can never be nullified or altered by any Earthly Power or Authority whatsoever. When once the Supreme Lawgiver and Governor of the World hath any ways signified and declared that such and such positive Laws shall be perpetually and unalterably observed, then those Laws (though in their own nature and with respect to the subject matter of them they be changeable) must remain in full

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full Force, and can admit of no Change from the Laws of Men. It would be a piece of intolerable Pride, and the most daring Presumption, for any Earthly Prince, any Council, any Societie of Men whatsoever, to oppose the known Will of the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth. In this Case nothing can take off the Force and Obligation of such Laws, but the same Divine Authoritie which first passed them into Laws. Thus much being granted and premised, I return this Answer to the Question proposed.

God hath been so far from establishing the unalterable use of any particular Gesture in the Act of Receiving, that among all the Sacred Records of his Will, there is not any expresse Command to determine our practice one way or other. We are left perfectly at our libertie by God to use what comely Gesture we please, either Sitting, Kneeling, or Standing. And if the Law of the Land did not restrain our libertie, we might use any of the forementioned Gestures, without the least violation of any Law of God. This perhaps at first sight may seem very strange and false to many of our Dissenting Brethren who have been taught to believe otherwise; and it may be (to judge Charitably) their Teachers and Pastours have in this particular been imposed on themselves, by the Writings and Assertions of other Men whose Persons they have had in great admiration. But yet I am so secure of this Truth, that I challenge all the World to produce the Chapter and Verse wherein any Command is given for the use of any particular Gesture at the Celebration of the Lord's Supper. That Popish Principle of believing as the Church believes, and swallowing all for Gospel which she affirms to be so, though very mischievous in its consequence, is not so Popish, that is, so ill, as to pin our Faith on the Sleeves of particular Men, and relying barely on the word and credit

See the Case of
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Acts. 17. 11.

credit of any one Man whom we highly esteem, of what Party or Perswasion soever. For this is to create a Pope to our selves, and make every Man whom we phansie infallible; this is to make two more than six, and the Authority of one Man outweigh the Authority of the Church, that is a Society of Men who are nothing near so liable to deception. I don't desire therefore to be trusted by any means in the matter under present consideration; and therefore I would have the Reader to observe this Rule: Trust no Mans Eyes or Judgment where you are able to use your own, but follow the example of the *Bereans*, so highly commended by *St. Paul* upon this very account; that is, to make an ingenuous enquiry into the Truth of things, to search the Scriptures whether these things be so as I say and assert. If this course were generally followed, it would go a great way towards the composing those differences, and curing those divisions that at present are on foot amongst us, occasioned by several Tenets and Opinions about matters of Religion. By this means, a great many which pass for Divine Oracles and Doctrines, would appear to be no other than the whimsies and inventions of Men. With this cautionary advice I might fairly dismiss this Question as being fully Answered, and leave all my Readers to disprove me if they can.

But because some may pretend they have not Leisure, and others want of Skill, and others are not endued with Patience enough to search and examine this matter thoroughly as it ought, I will yield all the Charitable assistance I am able towards their relief, by doing the work to their hands. My Business then at present is this, to Collect and Present to your view all those places which relate to the Sacrament, and are most likely to inform us what our Lord by his Institution and Appointment hath obliged us to. And certainly if there be any

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any Command which tyes us up to the use of any particular Gesture, Sitting suppose or Standing, and not Kneeling, we shall find it in one or other of the Evangelists, who give us a perfect Narrative of the whole Mind and Will of Christ in all matters necessary to Faith and Salvation: Let us therefore bring them under a strict examination. St. Matthew gives this account of the whole matter: *As they were eating, Jesus took Bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the Disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my Body. And he took the Cup, and gave Thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. For this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the Remission of Sins. But I say unto you, I will not Drink henceforth of this Fruit of the Vine, until that day when I Drink it new with you in my Fathers Kingdom. And when they had Sung an Hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.* Much to the same purpose is the account which St. Mark gives of this matter.

And as they did eat, Jesus took Bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my Body. And he took the Cup, and when he had given Thanks, he gave it to them, and they all Drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my Bloud of the New Testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will Drink no more of the Fruit of the Vine, until that day that I Drink it new in the Kingdom of God. And when they had Sung a Hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. And this is the sum of what Saint Mark delivers concerning the Lord's Supper. Saint Luke with very little variation thus describes the matter.

And he took Bread, and gave Thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my Body which is given for you; this do in Remembrance of me. Likewise also the Cup

Cup after Supper saying, This Cup is the New Testament in my Bloud, which is shed for you. This Evangelist indeed makes mention of another Cup which our Lord took, and after he had blessed it, he said to his Disciples, *Take this, and divide it among your selves*; and withal told them that he would not Drink of the Fruit of the Vine until the Kingdom of God should come; which Cup plainly refers to the Passover, as will appear to any one who will consult and compare the 15, 16, 17, and 18. Verses of the fore-mentioned Chapter; and is supposed to be that Cup wherewith the Jews were wont to begin the Paschal Feast, which they Blessed or Consecrated in this Form of words: Blessed be God who Created the Fruit of the Vine. And whereas our Lord saith he will Drink no more of the Fruit of the Vine, his meaning is, that he would never Celebrate the Feast of the Passover with them any more after that time, but their next Festival Meeting should be in Heaven: and this is very consistent with our Lord's Drinking another Cup after this, which he Consecrated to another use and signification, in the Sacrament, Ver. 20. And this is all the light this Divine Writer affords us concerning the outward Rites and Ceremonies which our Lord used himself at the Institution of the Sacrament, and established for the use of all Christians in all succeeding Ages.

As for St. *John*, he makes no mention at all of the Institution of this Holy Feast by our Lord. All that can be collected from his Writings relates to the Passover; or, according to the Learned Dr. *Lightfoot*, to what past between Christ and his Disciples at a common and ordinary meal in *Bethany*, and that for this reason, among many others judiciously urged by him, because the Disciples thought when our Lord had said to him, Ver. 27. *That thou doest do quickly*, that he had given order to *Judas* who kept the bag, to buy those things that they had

See Dr. *Lightfoot* on Mat. 26. 26.
Horæ Heb. & Talmud.

John 13. from Ver. 1. to 31. vid. Hor. Heb. Tal. p. 300. and Mat. 26. 6.

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had need of against the Feast, *viz.* the Passover; and therefore all those passages, and that discourse related by St. *John* in the foregoing Verses of that Chapter, were transacted at an ordinary and common Supper. And indeed this seems to be the great end and design which St. *John* proposed to himself in writing his Gospel, and which throughout he constantly pursues, *viz.* To add out of his own Knowledge several remarkable passages (especially such as tend to demonstrate the Divinity of our Saviour) as had been omitted by the other Evangelists in their History of the Birth, Life, Actions and Sufferings of our Blessed Saviour. There is another passage in St. *John's* Gospel, which in the Judgment of John 5. 53. many Learned Divines both Ancient and Modern, hath respect to the Lord's Supper, though not at that time instituted when those mysterious words were uttered by our Saviour.

Except ye Eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and Drink Ver. 54.
his Blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso Eateth my Flesh,
and Drinketh my Blood, hath Eternal Life, and I will raise
him up at the last day. For my Flesh is meat indeed, and Ver. 55.
my Blood is drink indeed. He that Eateth my Flesh, and Ver. 56.
Drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. Now all that can be inferr'd from these words, as they relate to this Holy Feast, is onely thus much: that it's highly necessary for all Christians (who have an opportunity to do it) to partake of the Lord's Supper, as they would partake in the merits of his Sacrifice, and the Efficacy of his Death and his Sufferings; and that none but such as do receive the tokens and signs of his Body broken, and Blood shed for their Sins, shall be owned and rewarded by him as his Friends. These are all the places that we meet with in the Gospel; let us now see what is delivered in the *Acts* and other Writings of the Apostles and Divinely-inspired Authors. Among all their

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Ver. 23.

Ver. 24.

Ver. 25.

Ver. 26.

I Cor. 10. 16,

21.

I Cor. 11. 20.

Acts 2. 46.

Acts 20. 7.

Writings there is but one place which gives any account of the History of the Sacrament, and Institution of it; and that is in the 1 Epist. to the *Corinthians*, Chap. 11. where St. Paul declares, that what he delivered to them, he received by immediate Revelation from Christ himself, viz. *That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took Bread; and when he had given Thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you: this do in Remembrance of me. After the same manner he took the Cup when he had Supped, saying, This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood: this do, as oft as ye Drink it, in Remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this Bread, and Drink this Cup, ye do shew (or shew ye) the Lord's Death till he come.* There are several other places wherein the Holy Sacrament is mentioned, and described by several Names and Titles suitable to the nature and ends of it, which for brevity sake I omit, and desire the Reader to consult at his leisure; and I would not put him to that trouble, if they did contain any thing that made against Kneeling, or that lookt like a command for the use of any other Gesture. Let us now look back a little upon the places forementioned, and see what our Lord hath ordained and appointed to be of perpetual use in his Church.

The Apostles and Disciples of our Lord, at the Institution of the Sacrament, were the Representatives of the whole Church; and are to be considered under a double capacity. Either as Governours and Ministers entrusted by Christ with the Power of dispensing and administering the Sacrament, or as ordinary and lay Communicants.

If we consider them as Governours and Stewards of the Mysteries, their Duty to which they are obliged by the expresse command of their Lord, is to take the Bread into their Hands, to bless and consecrate it to that

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mysterious and Divine use, to which he designed it, to break it, to give it to the Communicants, as he gave it them: And so in like manner to Take the Cup, to bless it, to give it to their fellow-Christians.

That which they were obliged to do by the command of our Lord, considered as private Men, and in common with all believers, was to take and receive the Consecrated Elements of Bread and Wine, to eat and Drink, and to do all this in Commemoration of his wonderful Love in giving his Body to be broken and his Blood to be shed for the Sins of the World.

And what the least Syllable or Shadow of a Command is there here in all this History, for the use of any Gesture in the Act of Receiving? Since then the Holy Scripture is altogether silent as to this matter, its silence is a full and clear demonstration that Kneeling is not repugnant to any express Command of our Lord, because no Gesture was ever Commanded at all: And this hath been ingenuously Confessed in writing by a great Enemy to Kneeling, and a great Advocate for Sitting, *That the Gesture of Sitting is but a matter of Circumstance, and not expressly Commanded.*

A Manuscript of an unknown Author, cited by Mr. Paybody, p. 48.

But the Scotch Ministers Assembled at *Perth*, affirm *Object.* that when our Lord at the Institution Commanded his Disciple to do this, he did by those words Command them to use that Gesture which he used at that time, as well as to Take, Eat, Drink, &c. The Force of their Argument lies in this, if it have any force at all: Our Saviour Sate at the Passover, as the Scriptures plainly inform us; and it is to be supposed he continued in the same posture when he instituted and Administred the Sacrament, which was at the close of the Passover: therefore *Do this* relates to, and includes the Gesture amongst other things. But this is a miserable

Mat. 26. 20.
Mar. 14. 18.
Luke 22. 14.

shift, which tends to Sink rather than Support their Cause.

Answ. I.

† Mat. 26. 20.
Mar. 14. 17.
Luke 22. 14.

For first, If our Lord did Sit when he Administred the Sacrament (which we will suppose at present) yet there is no reason in the World to incline us to think, that he intended by those words, *Do this*, to oblige us to observe his Gesture onely, and not several other Circumstances which he observed at the same time. Since Christ hath not restrained and interpreted these words *Do this* so that they should onely respect Sitting as he did, why should we not think our selves obliged to do all that he did at the same time, as well as this? For example, If these words may be interpreted thus, *Do this*, that is, Sit as Christ did, why not thus also, *Do this*, that is, celebrate the Sacrament in an upper Room, in a private House, late at night or the Evening, after a full Supper, † in the Company of 11 or 12 at most, and they onely Men, with their Heads Covered according to the custom of those Countries, and with unleavened Bread? There lyeth as great an Obligation upon all Christians to observe all these Circumstances in Imitation of our Lord by vertue of these words, *Do this*, as there doth to Sit. So that this Argument violently recoils upon those that urge it, and proves a great deal more than they are willing to have it. - It concludes strongly against their own Practices, and the liberty they take in omitting some things, and pressing the necessary observance of others, upon a reason which equally obliges to all.

Answ. II.

But I desire our Dissenting Brethren (who may be of the same Perswasion with these *Scotch-men*). to take this further consideration along with them; which I think will turn the Scales, and make deep impressions upon tender Consciences, and oblige them to observe most of the other Circumstances which they omit, rather

rather than this of Sitting., which they so earnestly press and contend for. All those forementioned Circumstances (except the two Last, which too are generally allowed among Learned Men on all sides) are expressly mentioned in the Gospel, and were without dispute observed by Christ at the Institution of the Sacrament: But the particular Gesture used by him at that time, is not expressly mentioned; and what it was, is very disputable and dubious, as I shall evince by and by under the second Query.

How then can any Man think himself obliged in Conscience, by the force of these words, *Do this*, to do what Christ is no where expressly said to do, and not obliged to do what the Scripture affirms he really did? Why that which is dark and dubious should be made an infallible Rule of Conscience, and that which is plainly and evidently set down in Scripture should have no force, nor be esteemed any Rule at all: These are Questions, I confess, beyond my capacity, and surpassing my skill to resolve.

It's clear from St. Paul in the forecited place, that those words of our Lord, *Do this*, do respect onely the Bread and Wine, which signify the Body and Bloud of Christ, and those other actions there specified by him, which are essential to the right and due celebration of that Holy Feast. For when it's said, *Do this in Remembrance of me*; and, *This do ye as oft as ye Drink it in Remembrance of me*; and, *As oft as ye Eat this Bread, and Drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come*; it's plain that *Do this* must be restrained to the Sacramental Actions there mentioned, and not extended to the Gesture, of which the Apostle speaks not a word. Our Lord Instituted the Sacrament in Remembrance of his Death and Passion, and not in Remembrance of his Gesture in Administring it.

And

Ans. III.

1 Cor. 11. 23.

4, 5, 6, 27, 28.

Verfes.

And consequently, *Do this* is a general Command, obliging us onely to such particular Actions and Rites as he had Instituted, and made necessary to be used in order to this great end, *viz.* to signify and represent his Death, and that Bloudy Sacrifice which he offered to his Father, on the Cross, for us miserable Sinners. Upon the whole matter, I think, we may certainly conclude, that there is not a tittle of a Command in the whole New Testament to oblige us to receive the Lords Supper in any particular Posture; and if any be so scrupulous, after all, as not to receive it in any other Gesture but what is expressly Commanded, they must never receive it as long as they live: And then I leave this to their serious consideration, How they will be ever able to excuse their neglect of a known necessary duty (such as receiving the Sacrament is) before God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us so much as to send his Son to be a propitiation for our Sins: How they will ever Answer to their Crucified Saviour their Living and Dying in the breach of an express Command of his given a little before his Passion to *Do this in Remembrance of him*, meerly because the Gesture prescribed by Authority was cross to their private Wills and Phansies, but not to the Mind and Will of God.

2. For the further proof and Confirmation of this Assertion, that there is no express Command in Scripture for the use of any particular Gesture in the Act of receiving the Sacrament, I will appeal to the Judgment and Practice of our Dissenting Brethren, and all the Reformed Churches in *Europe*.

1. To begin with our Non-conforming Brethren. There are a great many Serious and Sincere-Hearted persons

persons among them, who profess that (were they left to their liberty, and not tyed up by the Law to Kneel at the Sacrament) they could with a safe Conscience use that Gesture as well as any other. And they further tell us, that they are willing and ready to Communicate with us, provided we would Administer the Sacrament to them either Sitting or Standing, that is, any way but that which is imposed by Law. For the Rule by which they conduct their Consciences in this matter, is this: Things in their own nature indifferent, which are nowhere Commanded or prohibited by God in Scripture, cannot, nor ought not to be restrained and limited by any Power or Authority of Man: And therefore all such things which God left free for us to do or not to do without Sin, become sinful to us when imposed by humane Authority. It's remote from my business to shew how weak and false a Principle this is, and of what mischievous consequences to the Peace of the Church; and for that reason I will pass it by. But thus much may be inferr'd from this Tenent to my purpose, that they who hold and urge it as a reason why they cannot Receive Kneeling, which otherwise they could safely do, plainly own, that as to the Gesture, in the Act of receiving, it is in its own nature Indifferent, and left free by God for us to use or refuse as we think fit, and by necessary consequence that there is no express Command given by God for the use of any particular Gesture. It could not be a matter of indifferency to our Dissenting Brethren, whose Principle this is, if there were no Law of Man to Kneel at the Sacrament; and now there is such a Law, it could not be Indifferent to them whether they received Sitting or Standing, as they profess it is, if there were any Law of God obliging to the use of any one Gesture whatsoever.

2. That there is no express Command in Scripture for

for any one Gesture in the Act of Receiving, may be inferr'd from the Judgment and Practice of all the Reformed Churches abroad : Whose Judgment and example will, I presume, sway much with those who separate from the Church of *England* as not being sufficiently purged from the Corruptions of the Church of *Rome* as other Neighbour-Churches are, and who stood once engaged in a Solemn Covenant, to reform the Churches of *England* and *Ireland* according to the Word of God and the Pattern of the best Reformed Churches.

Let us now compare the practice of our Church with the example of the Protestant Churches abroad, and see whether she ought to reform the Gesture prescribed at the Sacrament.

The Reformed Churches of *France*, and those of *Geneva* and *Helvetia* Stand; the *Dutch* generally Sit; but in some places (as in *West-Friesland*) they Stand. The Churches of the *Bohemian* and *Augustan* Confession, which spread through the large Kingdoms of *Bohemia*, *Denmark*, and *Sweden*, through *Norway*, the Dukedom of *Saxony*, *Lithuany*, and the Ducal *Prussia* in *Poland*, the Marquisate of *Brandenburg* in *Germany*, and several other places and free Cities in that Empire, do for the most part, if not all of them, retain the Gesture of Kneeling. The *Bohemian* Churches were reformed by *John Husse* and *Jerom* of *Praque*, who suffered Martyrdom at *Constance* about the year 1416. long before *Luthers* time; and those of the *Augsburg* or *Augustan* Confessions were founded and reformed by *Luther*, and were the first Protestants properly so called. Both these Churches, so early reformed, and of so large extent, did not only use the same Gesture that our Church enjoins at the Sacrament, but they, together with those of the *Helvetick* Confession, did in three general Synods unanimously condemn the
Sitting

Sitting Gesture (though they esteemed it in it self Law-ful) as being Scandalous, for this remarkable reason, viz. because it was used by the *Arrians* (as their Synods call the *Socinians*) in contempt of our Saviours Divinity; who therefore placed themselves as Fellows with their Lord at his Table. And thereupon they entreat and exhort all Christians of their Communion to *change Sitting into Kneeling or Standing, both which Ceremonies we Indifferently leave free according as the Custom of any Church hath obtained, and we approve of their use without Scandal and Blame.* Moreover they affirm, *That these Socinians who deny Christ to be God, were the first that introduced Sitting at the Sacrament into their Churches, contrary to the Practice of all the Evangelical Churches in Europe.* Among all these Forreign Churches of the Reformation, there is but one that I can find which useth Sitting, and forbids Kneeling, for fear of Bread-Worship: but yet in that Synod wherein they condemned Kneeling, they left it to the choice of their Churches to use Standing, Sitting, or an Ambulatory Gesture (as the *French* do) and at last conclude thus: *These Articles are settled by mutual Consent, that if the good of the Churches require it, they may and ought to be changed, augmented or diminished.* What now should be the ground and reason of this variety both in Opinion and Practice touching the Gesture to be used at the Lords Supper? Is it to be supposed or imagined that an Assembly of Learned and Pious Divines, met together on purpose to consult how to Reform their Churches according to the pure Word of God, should through weakness and inadvertency overlook an expresse Command of Christ for the perpetual use of any particular Gesture, if any such there had been? Or shall we be so uncharitable as to think that all these eminent Churches wilfully past it by, and established what was most agreeable to their

1 At Cracow,
Anno. Dom.

1573.

2 Petricow or
Peterkaw,

1578.

3 Wladislaw,
1583.

Harmon.

4 Synods of
Holl.

own Phanſies, contrary to the known Will of God. Would they have given liberty to all of their Communion to uſe ſeveral Geſtures according to the cuſtom of their ſeveral Churches, if our Lord had tyed them to obſerve but one? Would they declare (as the *Dutch Synod* doth) that what they enjoyned might be altered, if the good of the Church ſo required, if to be Sitting had been expreſſly Commanded by our Lord, to be uſed by all Chriſtians to the end of the World? No undoubtedly, they would not, we cannot either in reaſon or Charitie ſuppoſe it.

The true Principle upon which all theſe Reformed Churches built, and by which they are able to reconcile all this ſeeming difference in this matter, is the very ſame with that which the Church of *England* goes by in her Synods and Convocations, *viz.* That as to Rites and Ceremonies of an indifferent nature, every National Church hath Authoritie to inſtitute, change and abolish them, as they in Prudence and Charitie ſhall think moſt fit, and conducive to the ſetting forth God's Glory, the Edification of their People, and the Decent

and Reverend Adminiſtration of the Holy Sacrament. Whoſoever therefore refuſes to receive the Lord's Supper according to the Conſtitution of the Church of *England*, purely becauſe Kneeling is contrary to the expreſs Command of Chriſt, muſt condemn the Judgment and Practice of all the Reformed Churches be-

yond the Seas, who all agree in this, that the Geſture in the Act of Receiving is to be reckoned among things Indifferent; and that whether we Sit, or Kneel, or Stand, or Receive Walking, we Tranſgreſs no Law of God; and conſequently they prove my aſſertion true, that Kneeling is not contrary to any expreſs Command, no more.

Vid. Art. 34 obſervat. of the French and Dutch Divines on the Harmony of Confessions, edit. Geneva 1681. ſect. 14. p. 120. *In hoc etiam ritu* (ſpeaking of Kneeling at the Sacr.) *ſuam cuiq; Eccleſiæ libertatem ſalvā reliquendam arbitramur.*

more than any other, because they allow of all Lawful in themselves to be used; which cannot consist with an express Command for the use of any one Gesture whatsoever.

Query II.

Whether Kneeling be not a Devotion from that Example which Christ set us at the first Institution?

FOR a full and satisfactory resolution of this doubt, I shall propound the four following particulars to the consideration of our Dissenting Brethren; which I will endeavour with all Brevitie and Clearness to make good.

1. That it can never be proved, so as that the conscience may surely build upon it, what Gesture Christ and his Apostles used at the Celebration of the Sacrament.

2. Supposing that our Lord did Sit, yet his bare example doth not oblige all Christians to a like practice.

3. That they who urge the example of Christ for our Rule in this case, do not follow it themselves.

4. That they who Kneel at the Lords Supper in compliance with the Custom and Constitution of the Church, do manifestly follow the example of Christ.

First, The particular Gesture used by Christ and his Apostles at the Institution and Celebration of the Sacrament, can never be demonstrated so as that the conscience may surely build upon it. This I shall endeavour to make good these two ways. First, we have no sure ground for it in Scripture. Secondly, the Customs observed by the *Jews* render it very uncertain and disputable.

Mat. 26. 26.
Mar. 14. 22.

1 Cor. 11. 25.
Luke 22. 20.

Luke 22. 14.
Mat. 26. 20.
ἀνέκειτο μετὰ
τοῦ δειπνεῖν, in
the Marg.

1. All that can be gathered from Scripture amounts to no more than this, that as they were eating, or as they did eat, as the Phrase is rendred in *St. Mark*, *Jesus took Bread and blessed, it and brake it, and gave it to his Disciples; and he took the Cup (when he had Supped, saith St. Paul; after Supper, as St. Luke hath it) and gave Thanks; and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.* Now it's very clear from this account which the Scripture gives, that our Lord did Institute and Administer the Sacrament to his Disciples, and that they did Receive it: But whether Sitting, Kneeling, or Standing, is no where mentioned, nor plainly determined. It's clear that he Instituted this Holy Feast at the close of the Paschal Feast, for he took the Bread as they were Eating, and the Cup when he had Supped; that he did Celebrate the Passover according to the usual manner of the *Jews* in those times, which was in a Discumbing posture, on Beds placed about the Table, much after the manner of our lying or leaning upon Couches. Yet whether, after all, the Apostles Received, or our Lord Administred the Sacrament still Sitting, after the same manner as they did at the Passover, is not exprest, nor can it be certainly concluded from the Word of God. The utmost strength of their Argument who urge Sitting in imitation of our Saviours example, can arise to no more than this: That it's probable our Lord did not alter the Gesture he used at the Passover, when he Instituted the

the Sacrament. But who sees not that a probability is far from a certainty ! A thing may be really false, though it seem likely to be true: And that opinion which is speculatively probable, may when reduced to practice become a great Sin and a great Error. Thus to refuse to Receive the Holy Sacrament Kneeling, and thereby neglect a known necessary Duty, and not onely so, but to disturb the Peace, and break the Unity of the Church, upon a bare probability that our Lord sate, which we are not, cannot be sure of, is a great fault in all who are guilty of it. For they appeal to an incertain example, against a plain certain Command, *viz.* to receive the Tokens and Pledges of our Saviours dying love, and *to do this in Remembrance of him.* They therefore who urge the example of Christ for Sitting at the Sacrament, and as a Plea against Kneeling, would do well first to make the example appear, and prove that he did Sit, before they press a Conformity.

2. If we consult the Records of *Jewish* Antiquities, and the Writings of Learned Men both *Jews* and *Christians*, concerning the Passover and the manner of the *Jews* Celebrating it, we shall find that they did not keep to one and the same Gesture throughout the Solemnity. For the *Babylon* and *Jerusalem Talmud*, *Maimonides* and *Buxtorf*, do certifie us that they did alter their posture at the Passover, though the Lying or Leaning posture was generally and most Religiously used and observed at this Feast above any other. And the Scripture gives some hints and intimations of the Truth of what they deliver.

1. It was the antient custom of the *Jews* and of those Eastern Countries at their ordinary Feasts and Entertainments to Wash their Hands and their Feet, and especially at their Religious Feasts to Wash their Hands often. At the Passover they Washed their Hands thrice

Gen. 18. 4. 19.

C. 2. 24. 32.

Mat. 15. 2.

Mar. 7. 3.

Luke 7. 44.

at

Traft.
Berachoth.
Pefachin.
Maimon.
in Chametz.
Umarfah.
Buxtorf. Sy-
nag. c. 13.

Vid. Buxt. Sy-
nagoga, c. 12.
p. 286.

Vid. John 2.6.

at least, according to the *Talmudists* and the Authors forecited. Which Ceremony could not well, nor was not in all likelihood performed during their Lying or Leaning posture on their left sides, as their manner was. For the reason of their Washing at all, and so frequently, was, that no legal Impuritie or Uncleanneſs might cleave to them, and to signify the great care they took to keep this Solemn Feast Holy to the Lord. And as they were Nice and Curious in Purifying and Washing themselves, ſo in keeping the Beds, Table, Diſhes, and all other Utenſils neceſſary for this Feast, clean and free from all pollution too. To Waſh ſo often more than the Law required, and the general cuſtom of thoſe Eaſtern and hot Countries warranted, was a Phariſaical Invention, and ſuperſtitiously abuſed by them; and, as ſuch, it's certain our Lord did not uſe it; but that he did Waſh ſometime before he Eat the Paſchal Supper, and after he had Sat down as the manner was, there is little reaſon to doubt: and all that I infer from hence is, that when he Waſhed, be it once or twice, he altered his poſture, and in all probabilitie either aroſe from his Bed and went to the place where Water and Veſſels were prepared and ſet for ſuch uſes, or had Water brought to him in a Baſin, wherein he Waſhed either Sitting upright, or Standing; which are both different from that Geſture which was peculiar and proper to the Paſſover. St. *John*, in Chap. 13. 2, 4, 5. Verſes, will explain and Confirm this Cuſtom we are ſpeaking of. There he tells us how that *Supper being ended* (that is, in a manner or almoſt ended; for by comparing the 12 and 26 and 27 Verſes together, we ſhall find plainly that they had not quite finiſhed their Supper) *Jeſus riſeth from Supper, and laid aſide his Garments, and took a Towel and girded himſelf; and after that poureth Water into*

a Basin, and began to Wash the Disciples Feet. There are Learned Men on both sides, who think all this was done at the Feast of the Passover, and that towards the close of it when he Instituted the Lords Supper; but I shall wave this, and not insist upon it, because, as I hinted before, I believe, as the Learned Dr. *Lightfoot* doth, it was no more then an ordinary or common meal; and therefore I onely shall conclude thus much from it, which I think is very probable: That it was usual with the *Jews* to Wash at their Feasts, and that in Supper-time: And that our Saviour complied with this custom. To Wash the Feet of the Guests was the Office of Servants, and it was altogether unusual for the Master of the Feast to do; but our Lord, to set his Disciples an example of Humility and Charitable condescension one to another, performs this servile Office himself towards them; which he might as well have done after Supper, if it had not been usual to have Washed in Supper-time. Seeing then it appears partly from Scripture, and partly from Ancient Monuments of *Jewish* customs, that the *Jews* were wont both before and at their Civil and Religious Feasts to Wash, and particularly at the Passover; then it's very probable our Lord did so too, and altered his posture as they did; nay it is very probable that our Lord, to make his Discipels understand what he was about to do, did at the Institution of this new Feast, the Holy Sacrament of his Body and Bloud, Wash before it; and having changed the posture that he was in before at the Eating of the Paschal Supper, did not resume it, but used a new posture at this new Festival-Solemnity; but what that was, is not certain.

2. At the beginning of the Paschal Feast, the *Jews* did put themselves into this Discumbing or Leaning posture, and used it while they Eat and Drank the two
first

Vid. Grot.
in loc.

Dr. Hamond
on v. 26.

Mark. 14. 12,

Joh. 13. 14, 15,

As the Talmudist and forementioned Writers testify.
Vid. Dr. Lightfoot. Hor. Heb. 291.

first Cups of Wine (for every Guest was obliged to Drink four Cups at this Feast) but at the third Cup, called the *Cup of blessing* in their Language, and the fourth styled the *Song or Psalm-Cup* when they Sung the Hymn, there was no necessity of lying along; and it's likely our Lord took an opportunity when he took the third Cup, to change the use and signification of it, and to Institute the Eucharistical Cup, called by St. Paul the Cup of blessing, 1 Cor. 10. 16.

See Mr. Ainsworth a Learned Non-Conformist in Ex. 12. 8. 11.

Buxt. Syn. c. 13. P. 300.

Pesachin, fol. 37. 2. Hor. Heb. 291, 292.

In vita contemplat. p. 663. Col. Allobro. edit. 1513. p. 695.

3. Before they Drank of the third Cup, the Master of the Feast took a piece of Unleavened Bread and brake it, and after he had Eat some himself, he offers the remainder to the rest of the Company, to do the like. After this he proceeds to take some of the bitter Herbs, and to dip them in a thick Sawce called by them *Charoseth* (which was formed in the shape of a Brick, to represent the hard slavery undergone by their Forefathers in the Brick-Kilns of *Egypt*) and commanded all the Societie to follow his example. Now this was not done in an inclining posture, as the *Jewish* Doctors teach us; and they give this reason for it, because this was to put them in mind of the *Egyptian* Bondage, and therefore here they stood in all probability, because to eat Standing was the manner of Slaves, whereas Lying along after a Lordly manner, was in token of that ease and rest they enjoyed in the Land of *Canaan*, and of their redemption from the House of Bondage. So often therefore as they Eat the bitter Herbs, so often they changed their Gesture.

4. Though the *Jews* in their Solemn Feasts used Discumbing, yet in blessing and giving thanks before those Feasts they were, as *Philo* relateth, in a Standing Gesture, with their Eyes and Hands lifted up to Heaven. And therefore it's no way probable that Christ and his Apostles would continue in their Table-Gesture at the blessing of

of the Holy Supper, which is an higher Ordinance than the Passover: Because this would be very unsuitable to so great a Solemnity; Especially too, if Dr. *Lightfoot's* Opinion be true (and it may be so for any thing that appears to the contrary,) viz. that Christ changed the third Cup at the Passover, called the Cup of blessing, into the Sacramental Cup; because it was the custom of the *Jews* then, to alter their Table-Gesture that was peculiar to the Passover; and it's highly Improbable that our Lord would continue in the Table-Gesture contrary to the General and Currant Custom of the *Jews*. They that don't think so as I do in this particular, will receive little advantage by being cross. For if it may be supposed that our Lord Sate sometimes when the *Jews* were wont to Stand, it may equally be supposed that he Stood sometimes when the *Jews* were wont to Sit; and what becomes of their Argument for Sitting at the Sacrament after the example of Christ? because that stands built upon supposition that our Lord Sate at the Passover, as the *Jews* did, and continued in the same Gesture when he Instituted the Sacrament, which was before the Paschal-Solemnity was over. I will onely observe this briefly by the way, and then proceed to shut up all upon this Head.

That those Nonconformists who cry out so vehemently against the Church for Imposing, and her Members for using a Kneeling Gesture, were very unfortunate in their choice when they pitcht upon Sitting, and urged it as the onely necessary Gesture to receive in, in Conformity to our Saviours Practice and Example: Because the Standing Gesture may be much better maintained and defended than Sitting, and hath more and greater probabilities attending it.

If therefore variety of Gestures were used by the *Jews* at the Passover, and it no where appears from

Scripture that our Lord did not comply in this matter; then we cannot know for certain what the particular Gesture was which Christ used at the Institution of the Sacrament: it might be Lying along, and it might be Sitting upright; it might be Standing in an adoring posture, with his hands and eyes lifted up to Heaven; which is much more probable than either of the former, for the reasons forementioned: we cannot certainly say which; and yet we must be certain of one, before we can build upon it as an Infallible Rule of Conscience. Let it be therefore granted to our Brethren who differ from us in this point, that our Saviour Sate at the Passover, that the Sacrament was Instituted by him before the Paschal Feast was fully ended, that the Disciples Eat the Sacramental Bread, and Drank the Sacramental Cup, in the same posture as they Eat and Drank at the Passover: What of all this? how will the necessity of a Sitting Gesture appear from these premises? Why, thus: Therefore our Lord Instituted and Administred the Holy Sacrament Sitting, say they. How doth this follow of course, I ask? Since they Eat and Drank in several postures at the Paschal Feast.

I confess the Argument had been strong, if they could make it appear, that throughout the whole Solemnity of the Passover no other Gesture but Sitting was used by our Lord. But this I am sure can never be done, and consequently their conclusion can never be good. From the whole I conclude thus much: Since the example of our Lord cannot be certainly known in this matter, our Church cannot be charged for deviating from it: And consequently, to scruple Conformity to the practice of our Church, because she doth not Conform to the practice of Christ which no body can certify us of, is very Unjust and Unreasonable.

2. Supposing our Lord did Sit as they will have it, yet

yet his bare example doth not oblige all Christians to a like Practice.

1. Because naked examples without some Rule or Note added to them to signify that it is the mind and will of God to have them constantly followed and perpetually Imitated by us, have not the force of a Law perpetually obliging the Conscience. Thus in our present Case, though our Lord did Sit at the Sacrament, yet his example alone doth not become an everlasting Rule for all Ages to observe, because he hath no where discovered his binding will and pleasure in this particular. And consequently, since he hath left us in the Dark, we may act contrary to his will and intention, when we so zealously press and follow his example, especially in this matter relating to Gesture. For even under the Law, where all other Circumstances of Time, Place, Habits, and the Ceremonies relating to Divine Worship, were with great particularity described, this of Gesture was left free and undetermined. God never obliged them to use any particular Gesture in any particular part of his Worship, but left it to their choice, whether to Kneel, or Stand, or Bow down their Heads and Bodies, or fall prostrate on the Earth; to use all, or any one of these, as Custom and their own Pious Prudence should prompt and direct them. Seeing then that the Gesture in the Worship of God was never determined under the Law: Since it was and is in its own nature a Mutable Ceremony in the Service of God, it remains so unto this day: Our Lord left it as he found it, unless it can be proved that he hath by some Command or Note of Immutability fixt and determined it to all succeeding Ages. But because no such Command or Note is to be found, therefore we are not tyed in Conscience to a strict Imitation of his Example. A few instances will clear this point. Our Lord was not Baptized till

Luke 3. 23.

he was about thirty years of Age ; but this example is not esteemed by the generality of Dissenters a Law or Warrant for us to defer our Baptism so long. So he Instituted the Sacrament a little before his Death : But is there no obligation upon us to receive it but when we are near our Graves, and under a Prospect of Death ? He also Instituted and Administred the Sacrament after a full Meal, in an upper Room, to Men onely. Doth his bare example oblige us to observe punctually all these Circumstances, or no ? If it doth, why do our Brethren of the Separation take the liberty to depart from his example in these things ? if his example layeth no necessity upon us to follow it in these particulars, how doth Sitting become necessary barely upon the account of his example ? I desire them therefore Seriously and impartially to examine this matter, and see if they can assign any reasons for this liberty they take of following the example of our Saviour in some things, and not in others, where there is no other Rule to guide them. I believe they will be constrained to do one of these two things ; either to withdraw their Suit against Kneeling, and quit their own Principle ; or condemn their own practices, as shamefully repugnant to it.

2. The bare example of Christ is no Warrant for us to act by, because the great end and usefulness of that Glorious example he left us, consists in this, *viz.* that it shews the possibility, and clears up the sense of his Laws, and excites and encourages us to the Practice of them ; it puts the Rule into activity, and sets it forth to the life. It is to our lives, as Exhortation is to Doctrine, it thrusts us forward to do that which we were obliged in Conscience to do before. *Whatsoever our Lord hath Commanded us to do, in that onely we are necessarily bound to Imitate him : But where there is no Precept, there is no Necessity.* We may do

do it if we will, and if we can innocently (*as in the case of a single Life*) but we are not under Constraint, and an indispensable Obligation. He hath Commanded us to be Meek and Lowly, to be Just and Merciful, to be Patient under all our Troubles and Afflictions, to follow Peace with all Men, to be ever contented and resigned to the Will of our Heavenly Father in all States and Conditions of Life, and the like: And in all these things he became an Example to us, that we might follow his Steps. He Commands us to do what he performed himself; and that which we are concerned in, if we would walk surely, is first to look for our Rule, and then for our encouragement to look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith. It's true indeed, we are Commanded in Scripture to follow the Examples of the Apostles so far forth as they follow Christ, and the Example of our Lord is made the Touchstone to try all others by; but then if we would know what is our Duty, we must bring his Example to the Rule. For as to Preach Christ and to Preach the Gospel, to Obey Christ and Obey the Gospel, are Phrases of alike Import in Scripture; so in like manner, to follow Christ, is all one with following the Gospel-Rule, or doing as Christ did in obedience to his Commands. The Sum of all is this; An Example may help to Interpret a Law, but of it self it is no Law: Against a Rule no Example is a Competent Warrant; and if the Example be according to the Rule, it's not the Example but the Rule that is the Measure of our Actions.

3. The bare Example of Christ is no Warrant for us to go by, because he was an extraordinary Person; and did many things which we cannot, and many which we must not do. He Fasted 40 Days and 40 Nights, and spent whole Nights in Prayer; he wrought many Miracles,

1 Cor. 11. 1.
Acts 5. 42.
Acts 11. 20.
Marc. 16. 15.
Heb. 5. 9.
2 Thess. 1. 8.
Col. 2. 6.

Miracles, to prove the Truth of his Doctrine and his Divine Authority by, that he was the *Messias*, the Son of God, and Saviour of Mankind; he was a Prophetical Priest, by which Office he was obliged to teach us the whole mind of God in all things necessary to Faith and Salvation, and to offer up himself as a propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sins of the World. Nothing (we should quickly experiment) would be more Vain and Foolish, than attempts of an Imitation in some things: And nothing more Wicked, than to think and believe we may and ought to follow his example in others. To dye to Sin, and Crucify the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts, is a good way (as the Scripture Teaches and Warrants) of Imitating our Lords Death in a Spiritual Sense. So, to Die rather than deny the Faith and Dishonour our Saviour, is great and Praiseworthy; but to Die for Sin, either our own or other Men's, to propose a Meritorious Death to our Selves, and by way of expiation, is a Sin of so deep a Stain, that the Blood of Christ will not Wash out: For this in effect is Trampling upon and Vilifying of the Precious Blood of our Saviour, and to detract from the Virtue and Merits of his Sacrifice, and thereby render it weak and insufficient to save us. Blindly therefore to follow the Example of Christ, is a certain way to run into Error and Mischief. We must then of necessity, if we would follow him safely, seek out for a plain Rule in the Word of God, or guide our Selves by the Dictates of Reason and Prudence; and either way is a sufficient Demonstration that a bare Example is not to be trusted to. Those who urge the example of Christ for Sitting, were somewhat ware of this, namely, that his example, and those of his Apostles, are not to be Imitated by us in all things; and therefore they lay down this for their Maxim and Guide:

Gillespie's
gainst Cer.
P. 339.

We are bound to Imitate Christ, and the commendable

dable example of his Apostles, in all things wherein it is not evident they had special reasons moving them thereunto, which do not concern us. But I would willingly be informed how we shall be ever able to know when they acted upon special reasons, and what they were, that we may know our Duty, if a bare Example without any Rule obliges us: And if we guide our selves by Scripture or Reason in this matter, then they are the measures of the Example. Besides, if we are not to Imitate them in such things which they were moved to do upon special reasons which did not concern us, then we are obliged to Imitate their examples in such things as they did upon general and common reasons which concern us as well as them, or we are not obliged at all by any Example; and if so, then those reasons are our Rule, to which we are to reduce their Examples. Without we find some general or common Reason, we have no Warrant (according to their own Principle) to follow their Examples; and when such Reasons do appear, then it's not the example alone that obliges us, but Reason that approves the Example. To bring their own Rule to the case in Hand: How do they know but our Lord was moved to Sit at the Sacrament by Special reasons drawn from that Time and Place, from the Feast of the Passover to which that Gesture was peculiar? How do they know but that our Lord might have used another Gesture, if the Sacrament had been Instituted apart from the Passover?

The necessity of the time, made the Jews Eat the Passover after one fashion in *Egypt*, which afterward ceasing, gave occasion to alter it in *Canaan*; and how do we know but that our Lord complied with the present necessity, and that his Example (if he did Sit) was only temporary, and not designed for a Standing Law perpetually obliging to a like practice? If Christ acted

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Gillesp. 338.
disp. against
Ceremo.

upon special reasons, then we are not obliged, by their own Rule; and if he did not, let them produce the reasons if they can, which make this Example of Christ of general and perpetual use, and to oblige all Christians to follow it. When ever they do this, I am sure they will expose their own Principle which they have built so much upon, to the Scorn and Contempt of the World; which is this: *That the bare example of Christ and good Men in Scripture, are a compleat Rule and Sufficient Warrant for our Actions, in such things as we have no Precept or Prohibition for in the Word of God: That a Christians Duty in a great measure flows purely from Examples Recorded in the Word of God, and not from the expresse Laws of God, which he hath revealed to us.*

John 18. 11.

4. It's absurd to talk of Christs Example apart from all Law and Rule, and to make that alone a Principle of Duty distinct from the precepts of the Gospel; because Christ himself, all the while the World enjoyed the benefit of his example, governed his actions by a Law. For if we consider him as a *Man*, like unto us in all things (Sin onely excepted) he was Born under the obligation of the Moral and Natural Law; as a *Jew*, under the *Mosaick* Law; as the *Messias*, sent of God into the World to compass the great Work of our Redemption which he had freely undertaken, he still acted by Divine appointment, and was under the Gospel-Law. He came to fulfil all Righteousness, and to teach us the whole Mind and Will of God, and Exemplify to us what he taught and delivered. That which made that bitter and deadly Cup which ended his Days relish with him, was this consideration, that it was a Cup given him by his Father, and the Drinking it was agreeable to his will; and it was the comfort and support of his Soul a little before his Death, that he had finished the Work that

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that his Father had given him. He frequently professed in his life-time that he did as his Father gave him Commandment, and that it was his great business and delight to do the will of his Father; and many such expressions he used, which may be consulted at leisure. If therefore we onely look to his Example, without considering the various Capacities and Relations he bare, both towards God and towards us, and the several Laws by which he stood Bound, which were the measures of his Actions, we shall miserably mistake our way, and bewilder our selves; we shall Act like Fools, when we do such things as he did pursuant to infinite Wisdom. Thus (to give but one instance) if we should Subject our selves to the Law of *Moses* as he did (for he fulfilled the Ceremonial Law, which he came to abolish) we should thereby frustrate the great Design of the Gospel, and of our Saviours coming into the World: And yet even this we are obliged to do, if his Example alone, be a sufficient Warrant for our Actions. I have staid the longer upon this Head, because so ill a use hath been made of Scripture-Examples, and to shew how far forth we may safely steer by them, I scarce know any one Doctrine so teeming and big with Error, so Fatal to the Souls of private Persons, and the Peace of Publick Societies both Civil and Ecclesiastical, *as that which teaches us to Learn and Derive our Duty from, and to Judge of the Goodness and Badness of our Actions by the Examples of Christ, and good Men, over and above what we are obliged to do by the Precepts and Laws of the Gospel.*

3. They who urge the Example of Christ against Kneeling at the Sacrament, as our Rule to which we ought to Conform, do not follow it themselves. Because the posture he Instituted the Sacrament in, which they say was a Passover-Gesture, was (if so) very different

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Joh. 17. 4. v.
Mat. 11. 27.
Luke 2. 49.
Joh. 4. 34.
Joh. 5. 30.
8 c. 28, 29.
Joh. 10. 25.
Joh. 14. 24, 31.
Joh. 15. 10, 15.

from that which they so earnestly plead for and use at this day. For that was a Discumbing or Leaning Gesture on the left side, much after the manner that we lye upon Couches, with the upper part of the body almost erect. It is agreed by all Learned Men, that this was the Ancient Custom of the *Jews* in our Saviours time, and is so to this day at the Passover, by which Gesture they distinguish this Festival Night from all others. Now if the same Gesture were used by Christ at the Sacrament as was at the Passover, and his example makes it necessary and obligatory to all Christians, for what Reasons and by what Authority do our Dissenting Brethren change it into Sitting upright, according to our Civil way and manner of Feasting? When they tell us this, it will be very easy to justify Kneeling by the same Authority which they shall alledge for Sitting; and our changing the Gesture will be as warrantable as theirs. Unless they will say, that they alone have the Power and Priviledge to recede from the Example of Christ when and how far they please, but our Church hath not, nor any other upon the face of the Earth. To say Sitting, as they do, comes nearer to the Gesture used by our Lord at the Passover, and consequently (as is supposed) at the Sacrament, then the Kneeling Gesture, according to the Custom of our Church, will do them no service: For there is no Room for this Question, Who cometh nearest to the Example, they or we? when they ought not at all to vary, if they keep to their own Rule. The Example of Christ, as it is urged by them against Kneeling, equally Concludes against all other Gestures besides what he himself used: And then the supposed Gesture which he observed binds to Lying along. For where we have nothing to go by but his Pattern, we must cut exactly by it, or else we take a liberty to do that of our own heads for which we

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we have no allowance: That is, we leave the Pattern which we were obliged onely to follow, and act at random upon our own heads; and then the Pattern cannot be alledg'd for our Justification. Though our Church therefore doth not strictly follow the Example of Christ (as is objected) by requiring all her Communicants to Kneel, yet they have no reason to complain and to scruple Communicating with us, who do not follow it themselves, but receive the Sacrament in their separate Congregations in a Gesture different from what our Lord used at the first Institution of it. The Presbyterians (if one may Argue from their Practices to their Principles) lay very little stress on this Argument taken from the Example of Christ. For though they generally choose to Sit, yet they do not Condemn Standing as Sinful, or Unlawful in its self; and several are willing to Receive it in that posture, in our Churches: which surely is every whit as wide from the Pattern our Lord is supposed to have set us, (whether he Lay along or Sate upright) as that which is Injoyned and Practised by the Church of *England*. There is too a Confessed variation allowed of and Practised by the generality of Dissenters, both Presbyterians and Independents, from the Institution and Practice of Christ and his Apostles, in the other Sacrament of Baptism. For they have changed Immersion or Dipping, into aspersi-
on, or Sprinkling and Pouring Water on the Face. Bap-
tism by Immersion or Dipping, is sutable to the Insti-
tution of our Lord, and the Practice of his Apostles,
and was by them ordained and used to represent our
Burial with Christ, a Death unto Sin, and a New Birth
unto Righteousness, as *St. Paul* explains that Rite. Now
it's very strange that Kneeling at the Lord's Supper
(though a different Gesture from that which was used
at the first Institution) should become a Stumbling-block

Mat. 3. 16.

Mat. 28. 19.

Rom. 6. 4. 6. 11.

Col. 2. 12.

in the way of Weak and Tender Consciences, that it's more unpassable than the *Alpes*; and yet they can with Ease and Cheerfulness pass by as great or a greater change in the Sacrament of Baptism, and Christen as we do, without the least murmur or complaint. Sitting, Kneeling, or Standing, were none of them Instituted or used to signify and represent any thing Essential to the Lord's Supper, as Dipping all over was; why cannot Kneeling then be without any wrong to the Conscience, as Safely and Innocently used as Sprinkling? How comes a Gnat (to use our Saviours Proverb) to be harder to swallow than a Camel? Or why should not the Peace and Unity of the Church, and Charity to the Publick, prevail with them to Kneel at the Lord's Supper, as much (or rather more) as Mercy and Tenderness to the Infants Body, to Sprinkle or pour Water on the Face, contrary to the first Institution?

4. They who Kneel at the Sacrament in compliance with the Customs and Constitutions of the Church whereof they are Members, do manifestly follow the Example of Christ.

For our Saviour complied with that Passover-Gesture which was at that time commonly and generally observed by the *Jews*, but cannot be pretended to be the same that was used at the first Institution of that Feast in *Egypt*. For thus the Command runs, *Exod. 12. 11. And thus shall ye Eat it; with your Loyns Girded; your Shoes on your Feet; and your Staff in your Hand: And you shall Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover.* This, say the *Hebrew* Doctors, was but a temporary Law, suted to the necessity of that time, and served for that Night onely, and did not oblige the following Generations in the Land of *Canaan*. For thus they comment upon it: Four things were contained in this

this Law, which did not oblige but for that night at the Passover in *Egypt*. 1. Eating of the Lamb in their Houses dispersed in *Egypt*. 2. Taking up of the Lamb from the tenth Day. 3. Striking the Blood on their Door-Posts. 4. Eating in Haste. Here the Gesture in all probability was Standing, though it be not expressly mentioned: Howsoever, it was different from that used by the *Jews* in our Saviours time, which was a Gesture denoting Ease and Rest, and their deliverance from *Egyptian* Bondage. And our Lord's Compliance with this Custom may teach us thus much, That we should not be scrupulous about Gestures, but conform to the Innocent and prevailing Customs of the Church wheresoever we live. To this Practice *St. Paul's* Rule well suits; Not onely, *Whatsoever things are True, and Just, and Lovely, and Pure, and Honest*, but, *whatsoever things are of good report*, (i. e. well spoken of, or laudable:) Not onely, *If there be any vertue*, but *if there be any praise*, (if any thing be much approved of in Common esteem, or is made commendable by Custom) we are to *think* (or make account of these things,) and conform our practice to them. And if Christians in the several places of their abode did walk according to this Rule, they would greatly promote the Peace and Welfare of the Church of Christ, and in so doing procure quiet and Peace to themselves, with unspeakable Comfort and Satisfaction. Whosoever would be esteemed and rewarded as a Peacemaker, and avoid the ill reputation and guilt of a Turbulent Person, ought among other things carefully to observe this, *viz.* to Submit to, and Comply with the Innocent Customs of the Church whereof he is a Member. For thus the same Divine Writer (after he had Argued against Womens being Uncovered in the publick Assemblies) concludes all after this manner: *If any Man seem to be Contentious; we have no*

Vid. Mr. *Almsworth* Exod. 12. 6. 11.

Phil. 4. 8.

εὐφημία.

εἰ τις ἰκανός.

λογίζεσθε.

Mat. 5. 9.

1 Cor. 11. 6.

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such Customs, nor the Churches of God. Pray by the way let this be observed from this place, That we may Lawfully do some things in the Worship and Service of God, for which we have no Command or Example in Scripture, or else *St. Paul's* Argument from Custom is of no force.

To sum up all upon this second Query : Seeing that we can never be certain of the particular Gesture used by Christ at the Institution of the Holy Sacrament : Seeing his bare Example (supposing he did Sit) doth not oblige us in Conscience to Imitate it : Seeing they who urge his Example do not follow it themselves, even in that particular they urge it for : Seeing Conformity to the Gesture prescribed by Law, is a plain Conformity to the Example and Practice of Christ, considered as to the Equity, Reason, and Spiritual Meaning and Instruction of it. I think no Man can reasonably object against Kneeling, and scruple in Conscience a Conformity to it, as being repugnant to the Example of our Lord.

Query III.

Whether Kneeling be not altogether Unsuitable and Repugnant to the Nature of the Lord's Supper, as being no Table-Gesture?

BEfore I proceed to the Case it self, it will be requisite to premise something which may explain the true sense of it ; and Discover upon what Grounds and

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and Reasons our Dissenting Brethren build their scruples against Kneeling, as being no Table-Gesture. By a Table-Gesture we are to understand thus much; That at the Lord's Supper we ought in their Judgment to use the same Gesture as we do at our ordinary Meals and Tables, at our Civil Feasts and Entertainments: And because divers Gestures are used at Meals, according to the different Modes and Customs of several Nations, therefore we are obliged to use that at the Sacrament, which the Custom of our Country hath prescribed at our Ordinary and Civil Meals. Thus (saith the Author of *Altare Damascenum*, a Stout and Learned Champion for a Table-Gesture, *Sitting cross-legged as the Turks do at their Meals, would be amongst them (if they were Converted) a Comely fashion of Receiving the Lord's Supper. The Sacrament is a Supper, a Feast, a Banquet, and therefore requires a Supper, a Feast, a Banquet-Gesture. And such a Gesture must be used as Standeth with the Custom of the Country. In no Nation was it ever held Comely to Kneel at their Banquets, or to Receive their food Kneeling.* So that according to the sense of their own Writers, and great Patrons of Sitting, this is the reason why they question the Lawfulness of Kneeling: That the Gesture at the Lord's Table ought to be the same with that which we use and observe at our Ordinary Tables, according to the Custom and Fashion of our Native Country wherein we live.

And then the full Import and meaning of the Query is this: *Whether the nature of the Sacrament, considered as a Feast, doth not require and oblige us to Sit and not Kneel, because Sitting and not Kneeling is the Ordinary Table-Gesture, according to the Mode and Fashion of England.*

Altar. Dam.
p. 762.

Disput. against
Kneeling, p. 2.
p. 56. arg. 4.

Abridgment
p. 61. reply to
Bp. Morton 3
Innoc. Cer. p.
37. set forth
in K. James's
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Here the Reader may observe, that this Argument for Sitting, drawn from the nature of this Holy Feast, quite overthrows the two former Arguments drawn from the expresse Command and Example of our Saviour, and renders them useless and unserviceable to their cause.

1. For they don't say we are obliged to use the same Gesture with our Lord, but only a Table-Gesture, though never so different from that which he used, according to the Custom of our Country where we live. Various Gestures, according to the Variety of Fashions and Usages of several Nations at their Common Feasts, may be all Comely and Sutable to the Nature of this Holy Feast. According to this Argument, therefore, we are not obliged to Sit, because Christ did at the Sacrament; and then his bare Example is no Rule to us in this matter. His Example was Governed and Guided by the Nature of the Sacrament, and the Custom of the *Jews*.

Our Lord Instituted the Sacrament before the Paschal Feast was over, and he continued in the same posture which he used at the Passover, say they, and that was Sitting. Suppose this, what follows? Why therefore we are bound to Sit too, after his Example. No, by no means, say I, unless it be the Custom of our Country to Sit at our Meals, and Sitting be our Common Table-Gesture: Which is the strength of this Argument drawn from the Nature of the thing, if we may believe what they say themselves.

2. Again, if the Nature of the Sacrament require a Table-Gesture, and we are obliged to use that in particular which standeth with the Custom of our Country, and the Gestures may be different according as their Customs differ, then God hath no where Commanded the use of

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of any particular Gesture, nor obliged all Christians in all places to observe one and the same.

3. And then Thirdly, we may Lawfully observe some things in the Worship of God, for which we have no Command or Example in the Holy Scriptures, if this Argument of the Table-Gesture be good. And this principle, *viz.* that we ought not to do any thing in the Worship of God, but what we have some Command or Example for in Scripture, is the great battering Engine which hath been constantly employed against the Ceremonies enjoined by our Church; and it is a Principle wherein the Mystery of Puritanisme doth consist, as Bishop Sanderſon Notes. Therefore it behoves our Brethren not to be fond of this Table-Gesture, as they love the Life of their Cause. I am ſure no greater Argument can be afforded of a routed baffled Cause in the matter of Sitting at the Sacrament, than to ſee the Patrons of it running up and down in Confuſion, and flying for Refuge ſometime to the Command of Chriſt, then to his Example; when driven out there, then to the Nature of the thing and Civil Customs, and about again to the Example. For thus the Authors of the fore-mentioned Tracts do. Thus much being premised, I proceed to Conſider the Queſtion propoſed; for the Reſolution whereof, I ſhall

Preface to his
Serm. laſt E-
dit. 1681.

1. Enquire into the Nature of the Holy Sacrament, that ſo we may truly underſtand what Gesture is agreeable or repugnant to it.

2. Shew that the Nature of the Lord's Supper doth not abſolutely require and neceſſarily oblige us to obſerve a Common Table-Gesture, in order to our worthy Receiving.

3. That Kneeling is very Comely, and agreeable to

the Nature of the Lord's Supper , though no Table-Gesture.

4. That the Primitive Church and Ancient Fathers had no such notion of the necessity of a Table-Gesture as is maintained and urged by Dissenters.

1. As to the Nature of the Sacrament , I shall endeavour to discover it under these following Heads.

First, the Sacrament in the Holy Scripture is called the Lord's Table , and the Lord's Supper , and and Banquet, by the Ancient *Greek* Fathers, because of that Provision and Entertainment which our Lord hath made for all worthy Receivers. It is styled a Supper and a Feast , either because it was Instituted by Christ at Supper-time, at night ; or because it represents a Supper and a Feast : And so it is not of the same Nature with a Civil and Ordinary Supper and Feast, though it bear the same name. There is some resemblance between this Holy Feast and Civil Feasts ; and the shewing wherein it lies , will in part explain its Nature. There are three things Essential and Necessary to a Feast, and included in the notion of it : Plenty , good Company, and Mirth. And upon the account of these, the Sacrament is (considered in its own Nature) properly a Banquet, a Feast ; but then it is a Heavenly and Spiritual one, consisting of Spiritual Graces and benefits , Communion with Christ and with all true believers , signified by , and tendered under the outward Elements of Bread and Wine : and even in these three particulars which are Essential to it, considered as a Feast, and are necessary ingredients into all Feasts whatsoever, it very much differs from Civil and Ordinary Feasts. For though there be *Plenty* , yet it doth not consist of Variety of Dishes, to gratifie our Palats, or satisfy our Hunger , as other Feasts do, and particularly the Passover did , where the Body was filled and Feasted as well

well as the mind. The provision wherewith our Lord hath Furnished out his Table, is not of an Earthly and perishing, but of an Heavenly and Immortal Nature, even the Body and Blood of Christ, which we Spiritually Feast upon.

Alas, if we only fix our Eyes and Thoughts upon what is placed on the Table, and those small portions of Bread and Wine allotted us to Eat and Drink, without lifting up our Hearts (as * our Church exhorts us to do, by the Minister, in her Communion-Office) to those Heavenly and Invisible good things, couched under, and signified by the outward Elements of Bread and Wine, what is there in all that we see that deserves the name of a Feast, or can by the help of any figure (but an Irony) be called by that name? Did ever any Man esteem that a Feast, where there was not Meat enough to fill his Mouth, nor Drink enough to quench his thirst? It is upon the account therefore of those Invisible and Spiritual good things, wherewith the Souls, not the Bodies of worthy Communicants are Strengthened and Refreshed (of which the Bread and Wine are but the Types and Shadows) that the Sacrament is, and may truly be called a Feast or Banquet. And for this reason † the *Greek* Fathers called it a *Spiritual Feast*, and the Table a *Mystical Table*; and the Cup, *the Cup of Mysteries*: and the Sacrament, take it all together, was by them Styled *the Mystical Supper*, *the Mystery*, and *Mysteries*, as Presenting one thing to the Eye, and another to the Mind.

2. As Plenty is one necessary ingredient into the Nature of a Feast, so also is Choice and Select Company. Feasts are made in expectation of Friends and Acquaintance. A Man may Dine alone, but in Proper and Ordinary Speech, no Man is said to Feast alone. Now though the Sacrament doth resemble our Common

* So St. Cyp. St. Chrysost. and St. Aug. expound this Exhort. of the Minister at the Communion. Cyp. de orat. Dom. Chrys. Hom. de Encaniis, Aug. de ver. Relig. c. 3.

† St. Chrys. in Pl. 90. Greg. Naz. orat. 40. Athanasius, St. Cyril. Hierosol. Catech. and others.

Feasts in this Particular (and therefore hath obtained the name of *Communion*, and the Guests *Communicants*, which Phrases do naturally import Number or Society :) yet if we consider what the persons are that constitute this Society, and with whom Communion is held, the Nature of this Spiritual Feast will further appear.

Eph. 2. 18.

Eph. 2. 13:

And truly our Communion is with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity; though principally our Lord Jesus, the Master of this Feast, in and through whom we all have access by one Spirit to the Father, as *St. Paul* speaks. This high and inestimable privilege and Honour of being admitted into the Presence of God, and holding a friendly Correspondence and Converse with him at his Table, is founded on the Blood of Christ, which we thankfully Commemorate at this Solemnity, by *which we who were afar off are made nigh*, as the same Divine Writer hath it. Moreover, by Eating and Drinking at the Lord's Table, we are United to, and hold Communion with all Faithful Christians and worthy Communicants, the Members of his Mystical Body the Church, whom he hath redeemed and cleansed by his most precious Blood. And that which qualifies a Man for such Communion, doth not Consist in External Garbs or Ornaments of the Body, but in Holy and Virtuous Dispositions of Soul, in a *Penitent, Humble, Charitable, Thankful, and Obedient Heart*.

3. Another thing necessary to a Feast is Mirth and Joy, (which implies also good discourse) and in this too the Sacrament resembles our Common Feast. But then the Joy is of a Spiritual Nature, and flows from different Causes.

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ness and Variety of Dishes which adorn the Table, nor from our Blood and Spirits raised and fermented by generous Wines; but from Divine and Heavenly Considerations. From the Boundless and Unaccountable Love of God in sending his onely Begotten and Beloved Son into the World, to lay down his Life and shed his Blood as a propitiation for our Sins; from the wonderful Condescention of our Dear Lord and Master, in undertaking this hard Task, in appearing Clothed with our Flesh in the form of a Servant, and at last Humbling himself to the Death of the Cross for our Sakes; from the Victory he hath gained for us over Death and Hell, and all the Spirits of Darkness; from the miraculous Redemption he hath wrought, and the Right and Title to Eternal Life, which he hath purchased for us Sinful Dust and Ashes, by his own most Precious Blood. This is the secret Language and Discourse of every Devout Christian at this Holy Feast, and with these kind of Meditations he refreshes and delights himself. So that from the whole we may conclude, that the Lord's Supper is in its own Nature truly and properly a Feast, though vastly different from Common and Ordinary Feasts throughout, even in those things wherein it seems to be like them. As to the several Names and Phrases by which the Nature of it is described, they are figurative, and borrowed from Civil Entertainments: but although it hath received the same names, and is represented by Phrases that properly suite to Ordinary Feasts, yet the Lord's Supper differs in its Nature from Civil Banquets, as much as Heaven and Earth, Body and Spirit, differ in theirs. As to the Bread and Wine which we see and tast, they are only Signs and Types of the true Spiritual Feast, and serve to raise our minds to, and whet the Appetites of our Souls after Celestial and Heavenly Enjoyments.

Thus

Thus much may suffice to inform us what the Nature of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is, considered barely as a Feast.

I Cor. II. 26.

2. For a further Discovery of its Nature, we are to be minded that it is a Feast upon a Sacrifice for Sin, wherein we are particularly to Commemorate the Death of Christ by way of expiation for the Sins of the World.

3. It was Instituted in Honour of our Lord, our great Benefactor and Redeemer; where we meet to preserve an Eternal memory of his Wondrous Works, to bless and praise him, and speak good of his Name. And thus partaking of the Lord's Supper is a proper Act of Christian Worship performed to our Saviour. It's the Worship of God manifested in our Flesh, and of our Crucified Lord, who submitted himself to a Vile and Tormenting Death for the sake of us Vile and Miserable Sinners.

Ignat. Ep. ad
Ephes. Justin.
Mar. in Dial.
cum Tryph.

4. The Lord's Supper is a Mysterious Rite of Religious Worship, which as it respects God the Father, hath the Vertue and Efficacy of a Thanksgiving and a Prayer, as the Sacrifices under the Law had. For our desires and affections may be signified by Actions as well as Words, and by Ceremonies as well as Speech: And with respect to this Notion and End of the Lord's Supper, it was Anciently Stiled *the Liturgy* and the *Eucharist*; which last name, as it was given to it in the most early Ages of the Church, so it still retains the same among all the Christian Churches to this day.

Luk. 22. 19.
I Cor. II. 24.

5. The Lord's Supper was Instituted to be a Fœderal or Covenanting Rite between God and all worthy Communicants: Where, by permitting us to Eat and Drink at his Table, he signifies that we are in a State of Peace and Friendship, and in a Covenant-relation with him; and we by coming to his Table, and Eating and Drinking

Drinking in his presence, do own him to be our God and Saviour, and in effect plight our troth to him, and Swear Fidelity and Allegiance to him : we take the Sacrament upon it (as we ordinarily say) that we will not henceforth live unto our selves, but to him alone that Dyed for us, and gave himself for us an Offering and a Sacrifice to God, for a Sweet Smelling Savour.

6. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was Instituted for this further end, *viz.* to be *a means* to Convey and Apply to us the Merits of that Sacrifice which Christ offered for Sinners on the Cross ; and as a Pledge to assure us thereof.

7. It was instituted to be a Sacred Bond of Unity and Concord among all Christians, to engage and dispose us to Love one another, as our Lord Loved us, who thought not his Life too dear, nor his Blood too much to part with, for our Sakes.

This is a short, and, so far as it serves my present design, a full account of the Nature of the Lord's Supper. If the Reader desire to see these things (which I have but touched upon) more largely proved and explained, let him for his satisfaction consult those two excellent Discourses (among many others) that pass under these names, *viz.* 1. *The Christian Sacrifice.* 2. *Discourse of Religious Assemblies.*

Set forth by
1. Dr. Patrick,
2. Dr. Sherlock.

Howsoever, by what hath been said it appears, that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is of a complicated Nature, and Instituted for various ends ; that it is vastly different both in its nature and ends from Civil and Ordinary Feasts : And therefore I conclude that we are not at this Religious Feast to guide our Selves by the Rules of Common Table-Fellowship, but by more Religious and Spiritual Considerations. Which leads me

me to the second thing proposed for the Resolution of the present Case.

2. That the Nature of the Lord's Supper doth not absolutely require and necessarily oblige us to observe a Table-Gesture, in order to a right and worthy Receiving of it. The Reasons that I shall offer for the Proof of this, are these:

1. If the Nature of the Sacrament considered as a Feast necessarily requires a Table-Gesture, then the Nature of the Sacrament considered as a Feast equally concludes for all other Formalities which are either Essential to all Civil-Feasts whatsoever, or to all Feasts as they obtain among us. For if Sitting be necessary, purely because the Nature of a Feast requires it, then all other Circumstances which the Nature of a Feast requires, will be equally necessary too. But our Dissenting Brethren will by no means allow of this, nor think themselves obliged to observe all other formalities, though equally suitable and agreeable to the Nature of a Feast as Sitting is: Though for what good reason, I am perfectly in the dark.

For 1. As they omit many things at the Sacrament that are as agreeable to the Nature of a Feast as the Table-Gesture is; So they observe several Modes and Circumstances which are not agreeable to the nature of a Feast, as the Custom of our Country standeth. For instance, at our Common and Ordinary Feasts it's very suitable and agreeable to Laugh, to Talk, and Discourse together; to Congratulate one another's welfare, to enquire of the State of absent Friends and Acquaintance, to Sit with the Head Covered, to Eat plentifully and Drink Frequently, to Carve and Drink to one another. It is further necessary and convenient, that at such Feasts the Guests should be well attended with Servants and Waiters, who are not allowed to Sit down at the Table with those who are
Invited.

Invited. It's agreeable that the Guests should, if they please, help themselves and their Friends where they like. And yet these (and many other things of this Nature) though very futable to, and commonly practised at our Ordinary Feasts, are not allowed of, nor practised by, nor urged as necessary to be observed at the Sacrament by our Dissenting Brethren. But why they should plead for and urge the necessity of a Common Table-Gesture as being agreeable to the Nature of a Feast or a Banquet, and at the same time think there lyes no necessity at all upon them to observe other Formalities equally agreeable to the Nature of Civil Feasts, and warranted by custom as much as Sitting, is the great knot of the Question, and that which puzzles me, I confess, to unty.

2. They observe several Modes and Circumstances at the Sacrament, which are not agreeable to the Nature of a Feast or Supper, nor to the customary way of Feasting among us. For example: The Sacrament (say they) is a Feast, a Supper, and requires a Feast, a Supper-Gesture; and then too (say I) it requires a Supper-time. It is called in Scripture *the Lord's Supper*, and it was Instituted the same night in which he was betrayed; and it's clear that our Lord Administred it at Even, and that late, at the close of the Paschal Feast. Now the Nature of a Supper, according to Common use and acception, requires the Evening or Night, as the proper and peculiar season for it; and yet our Dissenting Brethren make no scruple of Communicating at Noon.

It's not agreeable to the Nature of a Feast, that one of the Guests, and the Principal one too, should fill out the Wine, and break the Bread, and distribute it to the rest of the Society; but this the Dissenters generally allow of and practice at the Holy Communion. It's

not agreeable to the Nature of a Feast, to Sit from the Table, dispersed up and down the Room. In all public Feasts there are several Tables provided, when one is not big enough to receive the Guests; and yet the Dissenters generally receive in their Pews, scattered up and down the Church; and think one Table is sufficient, though not capable of receiving the twentieth part of the Communicants, in some large Parishes and numerous Assemblies: And where they are few in number, that they may come up to and Sit at the Table, they generally are against it (especially the Presbyterians) and think they are not obliged to observe that formality, though constantly practised at Common and Civil Entertainments. It's by no means agreeable to the nature of a Feast to be Sorrowful. To Mourn and Grieve at a Feast, is as Indecent and Unsutable, as to Laugh at a Funeral. But sure our Dissenting Brethren will not say, that to come to the Sacrament with a Penitent and a broken Spirit, to come with a hearty Sorrow for all our Sins, which caused much Pain and Torment to our Dearest and Greatest Friend, our ever-Blessed Redeemer: To reflect upon the Agonies of his Soul in the Garden, the Bitterness of his deadly Cup, the Torture he endured on the Cross, with a deep Sympathy and Trouble for the occasion, they will not surely, I say, affirm that such a disposition of Heart and Mind is improper and unsutable to the Nature of this Holy Feast which we Solemnize in Commemoration of his Death for our sakes. I make no doubt but all Pious Dissenters bring along with them to the Sacrament such a temper; but this they ought not to do, if their Rule hold good, *viz.* That at this Feast we ought to be guided by the Rules of Common Table-Fellowship.

2. The Nature of the Lord's Supper doth not necessarily require a Common Table-Gesture, because it's not
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of the same Nature with Common and Ordinary Feasts. It is very ill Logick, as well as ill Divinity to argue from Natural and Civil things to Spiritual ; to conclude that because they agree in their names, they are of the same Nature, For example : When any Man, who hath led a loose, sensual, wicked Life, is awakened and excited by the Grace of God to consider and take up, to mind Heavenly things, and to breath after God, and Christ, and Eternity ; to alter his mind and his manners, and lead quite another Life from what he did before, this Person is in Scripture-Phrase said to be Regenerate and Born again. But if we would go about to judge of the true Nature of Regeneration and the new Birth purely by the Correspondency it holds with the Natural Birth, and argue from the Natural to the Spiritual, we should Entertain very gross and silly Conceptions of Regeneration, and greatly mistake the Nature of it. How ridiculous would it be to prescribe the same Rules to be observed by a New Convert, or a New-Born Babe in a Spiritual Sense, in Order to his Spiritual nourishment and growth in Grace, as are prescribed and practised towards Infants and New-Born Babes in a Natural Sense for the maintenance and preservation of their Natural Life, and Strength ; as, that they should be Swathed, and enter into a Milk-Dyet ! And yet this is every way as reasonable, as to prescribe Sitting as necessary to the worthy Receiving of the Sacrament, which is a Spiritual Feast, because it's agreeable to the Nature of Civil Feasts : Or (which amounts to the same thing) because it's called a Feast, therefore it's of the same Nature with Ordinary and Common Feasts ; and Consequently, such a Gesture and Behaviour as is necessary and requisit to these, is also requisit and necessary to the Lord's Supper.

3. The Nature of the Lord's Supper, considered as a Feast, doth not necessarily require and oblige us to use a Common Table-Gesture, in order to right and worthy Receiving, because, in the Judgement and Practice of numerous Dissenters, it may be worthily Received Standing. Thus the Presbyterians (and all their Writers who have engaged against Kneeling) do not condemn Standing as Sinful and Unlawful, nor esteem such as use it unworthy Receivers on that account; and yet Standing is no Common Table-Gesture.

Object.

If any should yet urge the necessity of Sitting as the only agreeable Gesture to the Nature of the Sacrament: considered as a Feast, and that to use any other Gesture would Prophane the Ordinance;

Answer.

od. 12. 14.

r. 11.

I offer this to be considered as a good Answer, That: the Passover was called a Feast by God himself who Instituted it, and yet he Commanded the Children of *Israel* to Celebrate it in *Egypt* after this manner; *with their Loyns Girt, their Shoes on their Feet, and their Staff in their Hands*: All Signs of haste indeed, but no Feast or Table-Gestures either among the *Jews* or the *Egyptians*. To say that God enjoined Gestures unsuitable to the Nature of that Ordinance, is to call in Question the Wisdom, and the Knowledge, and the Truth of God, as not Acting upon a right understanding of, and in Conformity to the true Nature of things: it's all one as to suppose, that God, after he had Created a reasonable Creature, would enjoin him to do something that was disagreeable to his Nature and Reason. On the other hand, to say that the Feast of the Passover did in its Nature admit of several Gestures, is to yield all that I desire; for then the Sacrament, considered as a Feast, will admit of several too, and Consequently doth not oblige us to observe onely a Feast-Gesture for the due Celebration of it.

3. *Kneeling is very Comely, and Agreeable to the Nature of the Lord's Supper, though no Table-Gesture.* Which I hope will be made evident to every Honest and Unbiassed Mind (which Impartially seeks after Truth) by these following considerations:

1. Kneeling is allowed on all Hands to be a very fit and suitable Gesture for Prayer and Praise, and very apt to express our Reverence, Humility, and Gratitude by, and Consequently very fit to be used at the Holy Sacrament, and agreeable to its Nature. This will appear, if we reflect upon what hath been delivered concerning the Nature and Ends of the Lord's Supper. For at the Sacrament we express that by Actions (as I hinted before) which at other times we do by Words; and the Lord's Supper is a Solemn Rite of Christian Worship, which implies Prayer and Praise. It includes all the Parts of Prayer. By partaking of the Signs of his Body broken, and Blood shed for our Sins, we do Commemorate, Represent, and Shew forth to God the Father, the Sacrifice which his Dearly Beloved Son made upon the Cross; we Feast upon the memorials of the great Sin-Offering: And in so doing, we make an open Confession and Acknowledgment of our Guilt and Unworthiness to God, and we plead with him in the Vertue of his Sons Blood which was shed for us, for the Pardon and Remission of all our Sins. We further Humbly entreat him to be Propitious and Favourable to us, and to bestow upon us all those benefits which our Lord purchased with his most Precious Blood.

We Intercede with him too at the Communion for the whole Church, that all our Fellow-Christians and true Members of his Body may Receive Remission of their Sins, and all other benefits of his Passion. And as Eating and Drinking at his Table, is a Visible and Powerful

ful Prayer in the sight of God; so it is a Visible Act of Praise and Thanksgiving, whereby we let our Heavenly Father see that we retain a deep and lively sense of his Unexpressible Love, in sending his only begotten Son into the World to Dye for us that we might Live through him. And that which enlivens our Faith, and emboldens our hopes of finding Favour and Acceptance at his Hands at this time above others, is this, *viz.* Our Prayers and Praises are not onely put up in the Name of Christ, but presented, and as it were Writ in his Blood, and offered to God over the great Propitiatory Sacrifice. All this our Actions signify and speak, when we Eat the Consecrated Bread, and Drink the Cup of Blessing at the Lord's Table. If therefore these things be True (and I think no body who understands what he doth when he partakes of the Lord's Supper will gainsay it) then Kneeling must be judged as fitting and convenient to be used at such a time, when we signify our desires and affections by external Rites and Ceremonies of Gods appointment, as when we do it by Words, that is, when we say our Prayers.

2. Our Dissenting Brethren (and all good Christians) will Grant, that our Blessed Saviour ought to be Worshipt and Adored by all worthy Communicants, inwardly in their Hearts and Souls, when they Receive the Tokens and Pledges of his tender and exceeding great Love in laying down his Life for the Sins of the whole World. And if so, then whatsoever is very apt and meet to express the inward esteem and veneration of our minds by, can't be thought Unfutable and Repugnant to the Nature of the Lord's Supper: Because that is a Religious Feast Instituted in Honour of our Lord, and is a Solemn Act of Christian Worship performed to our Crucified Saviour. Our meeting together at this Holy Feast in Obedience to his Commands, to Com-
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memorate his Death, and tell of all his wondrous Works ; perpetuate the fame of our great Benefactor (as much as in us lyes) throughout all Ages, is an External mark of the Honour and respect we bear towards him in our minds, and is, properly speaking, that which we call Publick Worship. Since to Bow our Knees then, is allowed to be a proper mode of publick Worship, and an External Sign of Reverence ; why should an adoring posture be thought Unmeet and Unsutable to the Sacrament, which in its nature imports Worship and Adoration ?

3. No good Christian, of what Party or Perswasion soever, will deny, but that to lift our Hands and Eyes to Heaven, and to Employ our Tongues in Uttering the Praises of our Blessed Redcemer, even in the Act of Receiving, is very agreeable to the Nature of the Sacrament ; why then should Kneeling be thought Unsutable, which is no more but onely Glorifying God and our Blessed Saviour with another part of our Body ? Why should the Gesture be scrupled at more than the Voice, or the Bowing of my Knees be esteemed incongruous and unfitting, any more than moving my Tongue, or raising my Hands and Eyes to Heaven ? Especially if we consider, that the high degree of Honour and Glory to which our Lord is advanced in the Heavens by God the Father, as the reward of his Humble and Submissive Obedience here on Earth, challenges from us all manner of Respect and Reverence both of Soul and Body, *He Humbled himself, and became Obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus* Phil. 2. 8, 9, *every Knee should Bow, &c. and that every Tongue should* 10, 11. *Confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.*

4. The

4. The Holy Sacrament was Instituted in Remembrance of our Blessed Saviours Death and Sufferings: And therefore I request all our Dissenting Brethren to Consult one place of Scripture concerning our Saviours Bodily Gesture or Deportment in the Heat and Extremity of his Passion, wherein he presented himself before his Father in his Agony and Bloody Sweat in the Garden. *Being in an Agony*, he offered up this Prayer to his Father: *If thou be willing, remove this Cup from me: Nevertheless, not my Will, but thine be done.* But after what manner, or in what Gesture of Body did his perplexed Soul utter these earnest Supplications? Why, *Kneeling, or fixing his Knees upon the Earth.* Now though we may remember and meditate on our Saviours Sufferings in the Garden, when his Soul was so exceeding Sorrowful, when he was reduced to such a Weak and low Estate as to stand in need of Comfort and Support from an Angel; though, I say, this may be done Sitting, yet sure no Sober and Considering Mind will say, that to Celebrate the Memory of these Sufferings with bended Knees (as his were) on the Earth, is an Improper and Unsutable behaviour to be used at the Sacrament, where our proper work is to Commemorate the Death and Sufferings of our Saviour, and particularly these among the rest.

Luke 22. 42,
44.

Θεὸς τὰ πάντα.
Ver. 41.

Ver. 43.

5. The Sacrament was Instituted to be a means of Receiving the benefits of his Death and Passion, and a Pledge to assure us thereof. If we do but Consider what invaluable Blessings we expect to receive by our worthy partaking of the Consecrated Bread and Wine at the Table of our Lord, (such as the forgiveness of all our Sins, the plentiful Communications of his Grace and Spirit, and a Right and Title to Eternal Life) we can't think Kneeling an Unmeet and Unbecoming Gesture in the Act of Receiving the Outward Signs and Pledges

Pledges of this Inward and Invisible Grace. If a Graceful Hearty sense of Gods infinite mercy through the Merits and Sufferings of his Son, and of the manifold rich benefits which our Lord hath purchased with his most Precious Blood; if a mind deeply Humbled under the sense of our own Guilt, and Unworthiness to Receive any mercy at all from the Hands of our Creator and Sovereign Lord, whom we have by numberless and Heinous Crimes so highly provok'd and incens'd against us; If such an inward temper and disposition of Soul becomes us at this Holy Feast, (which I think no Man will deny) then surely the most Humble and reverential Gesture of our Body will become us too. Why should not a Submissive Lowly deportment of Body suite with this Solemnity, as well as a Humble Lowly Mind? And this is that which our Church Declares to be the end and design of her Injunction, in requiring all her Communicants to Kneel, *viz. for a Signification of an Humble and Grateful acknowledgment of the Benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy Receivers.*

See the Declaration at the end of the Communion-Service, in the Book of Common Prayer.

6. They who urge Sitting as necessary, and the only agreeable Gesture to the Nature of the Lord's Supper, because it's the Common Table-Gesture, must make the Sacrament either the same with an Ordinary and Common Feast, or onely like it in some respects, and unlike it in others; as every like is not the same. To make it the same, is directly to unhallow and prophane the Ordinance; *it is to Eat and Drink unworthily, not discerning the Lord's Body*, as St. Paul charges the *Corinthians*. For it's clear from that Discourse of the Apostle, that their not distinguishing between the Lord's Supper, and a Common Meal or Supper, was their great fault; which he sharply reproves them for, as that which render'd them unworthy Communicants. Which

1 Cor 11, 29.

Vid. 20, 21,
22. and com-
pare them
with 33, 34.

will appear to any that will take the pains to examine the matter.

If the Lord's Supper be not the same with an Ordinary Feast, how comes it to pass that the same Gesture must be necessarily used at both? If they differ in their whole nature, then that which is agreeable to the nature of the one, must be Repugnant to the nature of the other. If they agree in some respects only, and differ in others, but not in their whole nature, then Kneeling may be as proper and sutable in some respects, as Sitting is in others. For though the Civil Custom of a Table-Gesture be allowed to strike some stroke in a Spiritual Ordinance, where there is Eating and Drinking; yet other respects in the Lord's Supper have a stroke too, and that the greatest, if we duly weigh and consider the ends of its Institution, which I have already described. And if upon such Examination it appear, that Kneeling, or an adoring Gesture, holds fitting Correspondence with the principal respects and ends of the Lord's Supper, then the Banquetting Gesture, though Lawful and Sutable in some less respects, must and ought in reason to give place; at least, it ought not to be Insisted on as the onely agreeable and necessary Gesture, without which we cannot worthily Communicate.

Whatsoever Gesture answers the principal respects and ends of this Holy Feast, best Sutes to its Nature, and consequently ought in reason to be best esteemed of, and sway more with us than any other, if we will wholly guide our selves by the Nature of the thing. And that Kneeling or an adoring posture doth best answer the Nature and Ends of the Sacrament, I think is clear and undeniable, if the account I have given of the Sacrament be good. I am sure, howsoever, that there is no reason why Sitting should juttle out Kneeling

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ing as Sinful; and Unsutable to the Nature of this Holy Ordinance. Let Mr. *Cartwright*, a Learned Advocate for Nonconformists; be heard in this matter, and determine it: *A Man must not (saith he) refuse to Receive the Sacrament Kneeling, when he cannot have it otherwise.* Annot. in Luk. 22. 14.

4. The Primitive Church and Ancient Fathers had no such notion of the necessity of a Table-Gesture, as is maintained and urged by Dissenters at present; which will appear from those Names and Titles they gave to this Holy Feast. And First, I observe from the Learned Mr. *Mede*, that for the space of 200 years after Christ, there is not the least mention made of the name *Table* in any of their Writings. They call the place on which the Consecrated Elements stood, the *Altar*; and the Eucharist, An *Oblation* and a *Sacrifice*, because at this Solemnity they did Commemorate and Represent that Sacrifice which Christ once offered on the Cross for the Sins of the World. Now the Eucharist conceived under the Notion of a Sacrifice, and the place on which it was offered of an Altar, doth not necessarily require a Table-Gesture; there is not that strict Connexion and Relation between an Altar or a Sacrifice, and a Common Table-Gesture, as is conceived to be between a Feast or Table, and a Feast or Table-Gesture.

Can. Apost. 2.
St. Ignat. in
3 Epistles ad
Philad. Tral-
len. Eph.
Justin Mart.
Irenaeus.

2. The Primitive Christians and Ancient Fathers of the Church did not entertain any such conceits about the necessity of a Common Table-Gesture, as our Dissenters do. As, that *Kneeling or an adoring Gesture is against the Dignity of Guests, and Debarrs us the Priviledges and Prerogatives of the Lord's Table, such as Social admittance and Social Entertainment; that it is against the purpose of Christ, whose intention was to Dignify us by Setting us at his Table; and much more of this Nature, and to this effect.* Now the Primitive Church little dreamt of

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ing, Arg. 1. p.
6. p. 26, 27, 28,
31, 37.

this Dignity and Priviledge of Communicants, of this purpose of Christ, and of this kind of Fellowship and Familiarity with him; as the Phrases they use, and the August and Venerable Titles they give the Holy Sacrament, even when they consider it as a *Feast* and *Supper*, and speak of the *Table* on which it was Celebrated, plainly demonstrate. They call it, as *St. Paul* doth, the *Lord's Supper*, the *Kingly*, *Royal*, and *most Divine Supper*; which Import Deference, Distance, and Respect, on our Parts; the *Dreadful Sacrifice*, the *Venerable and Unbloody Sacrifice*, the *Wonderful and Terrible Mysteries*; the *Royal, Spiritual, Holy, Formidable, Tremendous Table*. The Bread and Wine after Consecration, are in their Language called the *most Mystrious*, *most Holy Food and Nutriment*, the *most Holy things*; and the place where the Table stood, the *most Holy part of the Temple*, in allusion to that of the *Jewish Temple*, to which the *Jews* paid the highest Reverence. The Bread in particular they Stiled the *Bread of God*; the Cup, the *Holy and Mystrious*, the *Royal and Dreadful Cup*.

The Primitive Bishops and Holy Fathers advise the Communicants to *Reverence these Holy Mysteries*, to *come with Fear and Trembling*, with *Sorrow and Shame*, with *silence and downcast Eyes*, to *keep their Joy within*, and to approach the Table with all the Signs and Expressions of Reverence and Humility imaginable. How can these Speeches consist with that Social, Familiar carriage at the Sacrament, which the Patrons of the Table-Gesture contend for, as the Priviledge of Guests and the Prerogative of the Lord's Table? For a conclusion of this whole matter, I desire our Nonconforming Brethren seriously to consider two or three Questions which I shall propound to them, and endeavour to frame an Honest and Impartial Answer, as in the Presence of God, who searches our Hearts, and tryeth our Reins.

They

They are not of a Captious Nature, started to puzzle the Cause, or for the sake of Contention (God knows my Heart, I have no such designs through this whole Discourse) but they are plain, and easie to be resolved almost at first sight.

Qu. I. *Whether of two or three Gestures which are all agreeable to the Nature of the Sacrament, any one is not to be chosen and used by us, when we can't use another without breaking the Peace and Unity of that Church where-in we live?*

Qu. II. *Whether it can consist with Piety or Prudence, to Expose your Selves and Families to Danger, and the last of the Law, when nothing is Commanded but what is consistent with the Law of God, and agreeable to the Nature of the Sacrament, though not to your Phansies and desires?*

Qu. III. *Whether we are not, as Christians, obliged by the Law of God, and the example of our Saviour, to deny our Selves many things, that are otherwise Lawful for us* Rom. 15. 2. 3. 8.
to do and use, and are highly pleasing and grateful to us, for the Good and Edification of our Neighbour? If so, How much more, when the publick good and welfare of both Church and State depends upon such self-denial?

Qu. IV. *Whether it be Piously done of you to chuse never to Receive the Sacrament, and so deprieve your Selves of the Spiritual Benefit of that Heavenly Feast, rather then part with a Civil Circumstance, such as a Table-Gesture is?*

It is the Custom of our Country to Sit at Feasts; but few men are so mad as to refuse to Eat Standing, and go Hungry away when they have no room to Sit down. Why should we not be as Prudent at this Spiritual

ritual Feast, in the Concerns of our Souls, as we are in those of our Bodies.

Put the case we were strictly prohibited by the Law of the Land the use of a Table or a Table-cloth at this Holy Feast, and we could not receive with that Convenience as now we may; would you end your days in a continual refusal, and never receive the Sacrament? I don't know how far Passion and Prejudice, and the heat of Disputation may blind and transport Men; but if they will calmly consider this matter, and hearken to Reason, they will find nothing to justify the total neglect of this Ordinance by. I am very apt to think they will be of my mind: for I declare to all the World, rather than not Receive at all the Comfortable Sacrament of our Blessed Saviours Body and Blood, I will Receive it on a Tomb-stone, on the ground, in a Church, or in a Field, if all other things that are Essential to it be rightly observed and performed. If any of our Dissenting Brethren shall upon this Question think as I do, viz. that there is no absolute necessity of a Table in this case, which the Custom of our Country requires at Ordinary Feasts; He will also at the same time see there is no absolute necessity of a Table-Gesture, and that we may Receive worthily without either the one or the other.

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R233803 Gray, Andrew.

Great and precious promises: or, some sermons concerning the promises and the right application thereof.
[Glasgow] : Printed by Robert Sanders, printer to the town of Glasgow, and are to be sold at his shop, anno
dom. 1665.

(Bound and filmed following G1616+. Variant not in Wing.)

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